

Lopez, Maria [COB]

From: Don Han <Don@wearegroundswell.org>
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2026 8:57 AM
To: COB_Response
Subject: Letters of support for Groundswell to the Honorable Board of Supervisors
Attachments: Jacqui Moore Support Letter Groundswell 6-1-26.pdf; Melinda Feldman letter of Support.pdf; Lucia Johnson Letter to BoS.pdf; 2026NAFCM letterhead OCBS.pdf

Attention: This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to submit the second set of letters in support of Groundswell to the Honorable Board of Supervisors.

This is regarding item #4 of the June 9, 2026, meeting.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can provide any additional information.

Best regards,
Don

Don Han-Pronouns: He/Him/Ai ([why pronouns matter](#))
Chief Growth Officer

Direct Phone: 714-951-5248
<https://wearegroundswell.org/>
<https://groundswellondemand.thinkific.com/>



*Creating transformative peace by amplifying, aggregating,
and advancing the work of community mediation.*

June 5, 2026

To members of the Orange County Board of Supervisors:

The National Association for Community Mediation, NAFCM, supports the work of community mediators and community mediation centers across the continent. Our members work every day to help individuals, groups, and communities address their conflicts in a way that leads to more **peace** and **fairness** as a result of a community mediation process. This experience in turn also leads to a greater sense of **belonging** with the community. To maintain those standards all our centers need the support of the judiciary, local government and businesses who understand that a more peaceful community is a healthier community.

One of our members is Groundswell. Groundswell as you know has been serving the communities of Orange County for decades and is viewed by many as a national leader. I, as the President of NAFCM, have collaborated with the team at Groundswell since 2016. In particular from 2016-2018 we supported their participation in a JAMS Foundation resourced grant that focused on strengthening the network of neighborhood associations in Santa Ana, leading to a more local response to local issues of conflict. In January of 2020, through an AAA-ICDR Foundation grant, we worked with the center team that was implementing structured listening processes designed to strengthen community bonding. Then most recently (2025-2026) we collaborated with members of the Groundswell team to develop a woven response to environmental emergencies. This again was resourced through the AAA-ICDR Foundation. Each time the team at Groundswell exceeded our expectations in their impact in increasing peace, the experience of fairness, and belonging.

Groundswell would not have been able to participate in these amazing projects if they did not have the base funding provided through the Dispute Resolution Programs Act (DRPA). This funding not only assists the courts with reducing caseloads but also creates opportunities for creating more sustainable solutions. The funding also increases the awareness of others in the county of Groundswell's services, so others approach Groundswell when another conflict arises. This reduces the need for court time and increases the impact of the projects noted above in this letter.

If you have any questions as to their work or commitment to enhancing the health and systems of Orange County, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Warm Regards,

D.G. Mawn

D.G. Mawn, M.A., J.D., President
National Association For Community Mediation
(602) 633-4213 (Main Office)
(502) 777-0603 (Program Office)
Pronouns: He/Him/él

NAFCM Board of
Directors

Julie Alli, Co-Chair
(California)

Whitney Trumble,
Vice-Chair (Illinois)

Charles Lieske,
Treasurer
(Nebraska)

Courtney Chicvak,
Secretary (New
York)

Martha Wilcoxson,
Chair, Impact and
Values
(Colorado)

Elahe Amani, Chair,
Membership
Enhancement
(California)

Lisa Singh, Chair
Strategic
Partnerships and
Resources
(Ohio)

Michelle Hubbs
(Florida)

Rae Kyritsi
(Wisconsin)

Justin Lock
(California)

D.G. Mawn,
President
(Kentucky)

In life, the use of mediation is critical. It is a learning and healing process that moves the enforcement of behavior from the laws, police, and court systems to the individuals themselves. The process gently considers all parties and gradually guides them to the other shore: a place of peace and confidence in one's ability to work mindfully with conflict.

My Mediation Background

As a Department Chair in a high school, so many of my contacts with families involved concerns they had regarding their children and the teachers in my department. I worked with parents, students, and teachers to ensure that the atmosphere was conducive to learning, and that communication between all parties was open and fluid. That required the skills of a mediator.

This approach resulted in better student learning, changing perspectives of teachers, so they can see the impact of their work and how to improve it. This resulted in positive outcomes in students' attitudes towards learning, students were also learning how to self advocate, and parents were understanding that the best way to help their child was to be a part of mediation.

As a Principal of a high school, there was a tremendous amount of mediation that had to be done between community groups, community members, faculty, staff, district office. In hopes that students could learn these skill sets before they actually needed them, I brought in a company that taught restorative justice skills to interested students. This resulted in a student run restorative justice program, designed by students for students. They also provided restorative justice between teachers and students. It was a powerful tool that allowed these young adults (and often their parents) to understand that there are so many other options to conflict beyond fighting, arguing, and lawsuits.

As a district office director of a vast program, working with a multitude of teachers, principles, parent groups, individual parents, and students themselves, I found my mediation skills were critical and allowed my team and I to create phenomenal programs that served our families and students well, and still kept the peace.

I have been a **volunteer for Groundswell** - formally Orange County Human Relations- for over four years. It is a well-designed, beautifully run program. It allows young people in college, who are going for communication degrees or want to be in a field that requires them to have good mediation skills, a training ground for their burgeoning skill set. It enables me to use my 40+ years of training, to model for people in the

community, that there's another way to settle conflict other than arguing, threatening, and lawsuits

I also mediate for Southern California Family Mediation.

What California Law Directs:

The Dispute Resolution Programs Act (DRPA) of 1986 and the Civil Action Mediation Act both explicitly directed the courts to implement Alternative Dispute Resolution programs to reduce the expense, stress, time associated with standard litigation.

Groundswell

To that end Groundswell not only addresses that directive, it does it in a way that - not only trains our future mediators- but, more importantly, teaches our community that there is a better way to resolve conflicts.

Mediation provides people who do not yet have the skill set to handle their own conflicts, to observe that skill set seeing Groundswell mediators in action. The verbiage and modeling are obvious, comforting, and reduces the anxiety that often accompanies the angst that brought the disputants to court in the first place. We don't always get a mediated agreement the first time, because it presents a way of resolving conflict that is foreign to them. This introduction is the start of a different way of thinking about conflicts and their resolution.

A long term concerted program designed to resolve conflict that models this process is a value - added standard that reduces conflict and its accompanying anxieties and heals communities. Next time our community members have a conflict, they may consider Mediation, or be able to actually mediate it themselves without the courts or police intervention.

Now that's a skill worth developing in all of us.

Warmly,
Jacqui Moore

Please contact me with any questions you may have:

Jacqui.a.moore@ gmail.com

916-716-3842

Orange County Board of Supervisors
400 W. Civic Center Dr.
Santa Ana, CA 92701

June 4, 2026

Dear Members of the Orange County Board of Supervisors,

The Dispute Resolution Programs Act (DRPA) is dedicated funding to support conflict resolution programs benefiting Orange County Community. At the center of excellence in this field is the nonprofit organization, Groundswell. Over decades of service both with community groups, schools, and the Orange County Superior Courts, Groundswell has been the leader in the conflict resolution arena.

Groundswell has partnered with California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) in providing my Master of Art (MA) students in the Negotiation, Conflict Resolution, and Peacebuilding (NCRP) Program volunteer experiences to assist in dispute resolution services for Orange County. My students are able to use their skills and abilities as peacebuilders both in court and with community concerns. CSUDH provides higher education for both Orange County and Los Angeles County college students both with undergraduate and graduate opportunities.

Groundswell's training program along with their commitment to reducing conflicts in schools, court disputes, and improving communications has strengthened the community with mediation services, restorative practices and proactive conflict resolutions education.

I request that the DRPA funding be granted to the Groundswell non-profit organization. Their ideals of equitable access to all residents, understanding the needs and interests of people in conflicts, and mediating disputes in courts help to create more harmonious environments at school, reduce caseloads for judges, and enhance the overall wellbeing of the cities in Orange County.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

With gratitude,

Lucia Galante Johnson

Lucia Galante Johnson, M.S. FHD
Associate Professor
Negotiation, Conflict Resolution, and Peacebuilding Program
ljohnson272@csudh.edu



Feldman's **June 4, 2026**

My name is **Melinda Feldman**, and I have been serving as a mediator for more than six years. I began my mediation training through Groundswell (formerly OCHR) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a Realtor in Los Angeles, my work came to a standstill during that time. Showings, meetings, and transactions were severely limited, and like many others, I spent much of my time at home. Because negotiation has always been a central part of my profession, mediation was a natural area of interest for me to explore.

The timing was ideal. Groundswell's training program, delivered professionally through Zoom, provided an accessible and comprehensive opportunity to develop mediation skills while remaining safe during the pandemic.

Groundswell's mediation services are a tremendous asset to the community. They provide members of the public with access to experienced mediators who can help resolve disputes efficiently and affordably, avoiding much of the expense, stress, and uncertainty associated with litigation.

Groundswell-trained mediators serve in Civil Harassment, Small Claims, and Unlawful Detainer matters, helping individuals and businesses reach mutually acceptable resolutions. These services play an important role in improving access to justice and strengthening our communities.

I am grateful for the training and opportunities Groundswell has provided, and I have seen firsthand the positive impact mediation can have on the lives of those it serves.

Melinda Feldman

Founding Partner

Advanced Mediation Solutions